

Message Text

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PAGE 01 HERMOS 00319 290049Z

64

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SUBJECT: GOVERNOR BIEBRICH RESIGNS; SUBSTITUE GOVERNOR
OF SONORA SWORN-IN; LAND REFORM IN SONORA TO BE SPEEDED

SUMMARY: THE BLOODY EVENTS OF THURSDAY MORNING OCTOBER 23, WHEN SIX FARM WORKERS DIED AND SIXTEEN WERE WOUNDED AT SAN IGNACIO DE RIO MUERTO IN THE YAQUI VALLY IN SOUTHERN SONORA HAVE SHAKEN THE POLITICAL ORDER IN SONORA. AT NOON OCTOBER 25 IT BECAME KNOWN THAT CARLOS ARMANDO BIEBRICH, SWORN IN SEPTEMBER 13, 1973 FOR A SIX-YEAR TERM, HAD RESIGNED HIS OFFICE; SHORTLY AFTER FIVE PM, ALEJANDRO CARRILLO MARCOR, SENATOR FROM STATE OF SONORA, DIRECTOR OF "EL NACIONAL", FORMER AMBASSADOR IN THE U.A.R., WAS INAUGURATED SUBSTITUTE GOVERNOR OF SONORA FOR REMAINDER OF BIEBRICH'S TERM. THE NEW GOVERNOR AND THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR AGRICULTURAL REFORM FELIX BARRA GARCIA HAVE ANNOUNCED IN HERMOSILLO THAT THE PROCESS OF REVIEW OF THE NEARLY ONE THOUSAND CASES OF DEMANDS FOR THE TRANSFER OF LAND FROM PRIVATE OWNERS TO FARM WORKERS WILL BE REMOVED FROM MEXICO CITY TO SONORA, AND THAT DECISIONS ON THESE DEMANDS WILL BE DRASTICALLY SPEEDED. END SUMMARY.

1. CULMINATING A SERIES OF LAND SEIZURES TAKING PLACE IN SOUTHERN SONORA AND IN NEIGHBORING SINALOA DURING RECENT MONTHS GROUPS OF FARM WORKERS LED BY ORGANIZERS OF THE
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PAGE 02 HERMOS 00319 290049Z

CENTRAL CAMPESINA INDEPENDIENTE (CCI), OCCUPIED PRIVATE LANDS

IN THE YAQUI VALLEY BETWEEN GUAYMAS AND CIUDAD OBREGON, SOUTH OF HERMOSILLO, EARLY MONDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 20, TO DRAMATIZE THEIR IMPATIENCE WITH LONG DELAYS OF FEDERAL AND STATE BUREAUCRACIES IN PROCESSING AND DECIDING DEMANDS FOR TRANSFER OF LAND HELD BY ALLEGED ABSENTEE OWNERS TO LANDLESS FARM WORKERS AND PEASANTS. PROPERTY OWNERS APPEALED TO COURTS AND OBTAINED EVICTION ORDERS PURSUANT TO MEXICAN CONSTITUTION AND LAWS, WHICH STATE AND LOCAL POLICE AUTHORITIES WERE INSTRUCTED TO CARRY OUT. EVICTION ACTION SCHEDULED FOR DAWN OCTOBER 23. IT WAS PEACEFULLY CARRIED OUT AT ONE FARM OCCUPIED BY OVER 100 MEN, WOMEN, AND CHILDREN. HOWEVER, CCI LEADERS AT SO-CALLED DENGEL FARM, WHERE OVER 300 PERSONS HAD SEIZED THE LAND, REPORTEDLY REFUSED TO HEED EVICTION ORDER, ALLEGEDLY OPENED FIRE ON POLICE FORCES INSTEAD. TEN MINUTE GUNFIGHT, FINALLY BROKEN UP BY USE OF TEAR GAS, LEFT 6 DEAD AND 16 WOUNDED, ALL AMONG SQUATTERS. A SEVENTH VICTIM DIED OCTOBER 24. FIFTY WERE ARRESTED, INCLUDING THE LOCAL CCI LEADERS, AND SUBSTANTIAL STOCK OF ARMS WAS REPORTED FOUND IN POSSESSION OF THE SQUATTERS.

2. AS GOVERNOR BIEBRICH AND SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURAL REFORM CONVERGED ON CIUDAD OBREGON THURSDAY AFTERNOON TO MEET WITH FARMERS ORGANIZATIONS LEADERS, PROPERTY OWNERS, AND AGRICULTURAL REFORM OFFICIALS, LOCAL PRESS STRESSED THE RESPONSIBILITY OF FARMERS' ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUAL LEADERS, NOTABLY CCI, FOR THE INCIDENTS AND LOSS OF LIFE. LATE FRIDAY, OCTOBER 24, NATIONAL LEADERS OF FARM WORKER AND PEASANTS' ORGANIZATION AT CIUDAD OBREGON MASS MEETING REPORTEDLY ATTENDED BY MORE THAN TEN THOUSAND "CAMPEÑINOS" CHARGED GOVERNOR BIEBRICH WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR TRAGEDY AND DEMANDED HIS RESIGNATION OR REMOVAL. BIEBRICH PUBLICLY ACCEPTED SHARE OF RESPONSIBILITY AS CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF SONORA, ORDERED IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF THOSE ARRESTED PREVIOUS DAY, INCLUDING THOSE CCI LEADERS ORIGINALLY BLAMED FOR LAND SEIZURES AND OPENING FIRE ON POLICE, AND DISMISSED CHIEF OF STATE JUDICIAL POLICE, LT. COLONEL FRANCISCO ARELLANO NOBLECIA, WHO WAS IN COMMAND OF POLICE AT SITE OF CLASH.

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PAGE 03 HERMOS 00319 290049Z

3. SATURDAY NOON EXTRA EDITIONS OF LOCAL NEWSPAPERS ANNOUNCED BIEBRICH RESIGNATION AND DESIGNATION OF SENATOR ALEJANDRO CARRILLO MARCOT TO SUCCEED HIM. STATE LEGISLATURE WAS HURRIEDLY SUMMONED TO ACCEPT BIEBRICH RESIGNATION AND CARRILLO NOMINATION, AND REMAINED IN SPECIAL SESSION UNTIL HE REACHED HERMOSILLO AND COULD BE SWORN IN AT FIVE PM SATURDAY AFTERNOON.

4. IN ACCEPTANCE SPEECH, NEW GOVERNOR PROMISED TO WORK FOR

CONTINUED PROGRESS OF SONORA, AND TO DEVOTE ALL HIS EFFORTS TO ACHIEVING BASIS FOR SOCIAL PEACE. HE EMPHASIZED THAT SONORA, LAND OF ALVARO OBREGON WHO AS PRESIDENT OF MEXICO WAS FIRST TO DISTRIBUTE FOUR MILLION HECTARES TO LANDLESS PEASANTS, COULD NO LONGER LAG BEHIND NATION IN ASSURING THAT THOSE WHO WANTED LAND WOULD HAVE ACCESS TO IT. HIS FIRST CONCERN, HE SAID, WOULD BE TO SATISFY THE DEMANDS OF THE CAMPESINOS, AND THAT FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WOULD BACK THESE EFFORTS. IT WAS ANNOUNCED THAT SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURAL REFORM HAD ORDERED THE TRANSFER OF THE REVIEW OF THE PENDING CASES BACK TO SONORA, WOULD HIMSELF HEAD TEAMS OF OFFICIALS HEARING CAMPESINOS DEMANDS, AND THAT FINAL DECISIONS WOULD BE REACHED SPEEDILY BUT "WITHIN THE LAW".
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